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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3402
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1086
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RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [KCRM](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: DEMONSTRATORS COME AND GO/WORLD CUP GOES ON

REF: PAUP 1026

¶1. This message is sensitive but unclassified -- please protect accordingly.

¶2. (SBU) Summary. Rumored large-scale demonstrations by Fanmi Lavalas (FL) partisans, whether demanding the restoration of their government jobs or the return of Aristide, have yet to materialize, despite continued rumors of ongoing plans. Fifteen to Thirty demonstrators assembled at the national palace and the legislative palace on roughly five occasions during the last weeks of May as the Preval government and the new parliament first took up their duties. Two to three thousand demonstrators on June 13 protested in front of the palace of justice on behalf of jailed FL activist "So Anne." Rene Civil led a demonstration of roughly 100-150 in Port-au-Prince on July 23. None of these instances have led to continued demonstrations. In all cases, the Haitian police's crowd control unit (CIMO), backed by MINUSTAH troops and police advisors, have performed admirably. News reports and Embassy contacts indicate that small groups of self-identified FL partisans fired from their government jobs have appeared at various ministries and public agencies demanding reinstatement. Planned sit-ins at Teleco, the state telephone company, and five other public institutions announced by FL partisans in the press for June 27 failed to materialize. Most observers credit the World Cup for the calm political atmosphere. Post also credits splits within FL (reftel) and continued waning support among the masses for the militant FL cause. End Summary.

Small Demonstrations

¶3. (SBU) Militants have organized small demonstrations around Port-au-Prince over the past month variously demanding the release of Fanmi Lavalas (FL) "political prisoners," the restoration of government jobs to FL "partisans," the return of Aristide and, during the period when the national assembly was considering approval of Prime Minister Alexis' government, support for Alexis and Preval's L'Espwa party. Demonstrations that occurred in front of the parliament and the palace, which took place the last two weeks of May and

coincided with the first business days of the Preval administration, numbered no more than 15-20 active demonstrators with on-lookers swelling their ranks to 50-75. (Note: The legislative palace and the facing park where crowds form are visible from the second floor of the Embassy. End Note.)

14. (SBU) Polcouns surveyed the June 1 demonstration in front of the legislative palace on the occasion of Prime Minister Alexis' presentation of his "general policy" and cabinet ministers. A motley group of roughly 15 demonstrators, accompanied by roughly 40 on-lookers from the park, shouted various demands, including requests that MINUSTAH troops (also present) come back to Haiti not as occupiers but as tourists. The Ambassador, who attended Alexis' presentation, reported that upon her exit from the palace as many of the demonstrators shouted greetings as protested. A CIMO unit of roughly 40 officers, accompanied by two French UNPol advisors interposed itself between the demonstrators and the national assembly. The CIMO officers kept closed ranks, but both sides exhibited a relatively relaxed demeanor. The French UNPol officers told Polcouns they had deployed to other demonstrations there and at the national palace. All had been relatively calm with no threat of disorder. A company of Jordanian MINUSTAH troops in an armored personnel carrier looked on from behind the CIMO unit.

Larger Demonstrations

15. (SBU) According to credible news reports, 2,000 - 3,000 demonstrators appeared on June 12 in front of the palace of justice to demand the release of imprisoned FL activist

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Annette Auguste "So Anne" (Sister Anne). The FL-affiliated "Mouvman Fanm Vanyant Ayisyen" (Movement of Powerful Haitian Women) billed itself as the principal organizer of the protest. Later reports from FL activists indicated that other popular organizations also participated. Judicial authorities had scheduled a hearing on So Anne's case for that day but later postponed the hearing, reportedly for reasons unrelated to the demonstration. According to press reports, Rene Civil led a demonstration on June 23 in downtown Port-au-Prince numbering 100-150, demanding the release of "political prisoners," restoration of FL government jobs, and Aristide's return. (Note: Reftel details the split between FL leaders willing to organize for the cause of "political prisoners," but unwilling to follow Civil's call for mass demonstrations in favor of Aristide. End Note.)

No Demonstrations

16. (SBU) FL activists appeared on television and radio on June 26-27 to announce a series of sit-ins by FL partisans fired from their public sector jobs scheduled for June 27 at designated times in front of Teleco, the state electrical company (EdH), and four ministries. Poloff went to each site to observe the sit-ins and reported that no demonstrators had appeared -- nor any police waiting for them. Embassy contacts confirmed later in the afternoon that no demonstrators had ever materialized at any of the sites. Media and embassy contacts have reported earlier instances of groups of former employees re-appearing at ministries and state agencies demanding their jobs back, and supervisors calling the police in response. presidential advisor Alix Fils-Aime told Polcouns on June 26 that these incidents were a "bother," but so far had been small and manageable

Comment

17. (SBU) Most observers predicted that the beginning of the

World Cup, which Haitians follow fervently, would sharply limit any appetite for disruptive behavior on the part of the Haitian masses. Post also believes that splits within FL leadership (reftel) and continued waning support for FL demands among the masses account for the calm political atmosphere. Rumors of continued plans for large-scale FL demonstrations linked to specific deadlines -- some of which have already passed -- including Preval's return from abroad scheduled for July 6, continue to circulate. Similar rumors have circulated with regularity over the past two years connected to significant FL anniversaries or elections-related issues, but no significant FL demonstration has taken place during that time. In the meantime, the continued success of Brazil, Haiti's surrogate World Cup representative, gives hope to many that calm will prevail at least through the World Cup final.

SMITH